

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated May 17, 2010, claims 1-14 are pending, claims 6-13 are withdrawn from consideration, and claims 1-5 and 14 are rejected. Reconsideration is requested for at least the reasons discussed in the paper filed August 10, 2010, which are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

The Examiner asserted that Horiuchi discloses "evacuating the vacuum chamber prior to the sealant arranging step". The sealant arranging step of Horiuchi is disclosed in paragraph 0035, lines 1-6. Evacuating the vacuum chamber is disclosed in paragraph 0031, lines 14-16. However, contrary to the presently claimed invention, as disclosed in paragraph 0033, lines 1-5, the vacuum state is *released before* the process disclosed in paragraph 0035. It is to be noted that the lower face of glass substrate 3 and the top face of plastic substrate 1 are subjected to the pressure-reduced atmosphere at the point of time of the process disclosed in paragraph 0031 (Fig. 3A) of the Horiuchi reference, and both substrates do not form contact with liquid crystal afterwards.

In accord with the present invention, the substrate is subjected to a reduced-pressure state prior to the sealant arranging step to remove moisture included in the alignment film located at the surface of the substrate. If moisture remains in the alignment film, the moisture will enter the liquid crystal when assembled afterwards: The invention of the subject application aims to prevent such introduction of moisture.

Applicants respectfully submit that evacuating the chamber in advance under a state where only the surface that will not form contact with liquid crystal is exposed, as in Horiuchi, provides no meaning for the present invention.

Referring to Figs. 3A and 3B of the Horiuchi reference, the lead line of alignment film 2 designates a layer identical to lower plate 101. In view of the context, Applicants submit that this is an error in the drawing. To be correct, alignment film 2 is the thin film below plastic substrate 1. Note that Figs. 4A and et seq. in the Horiuchi reference properly show alignment film 2. Alignment

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film 2 is covered with a roughened plate 102. In the Horiuchi reference, removing moisture intentionally from the alignment film, as in the invention of the subject application, by taking advantage of the reduced-pressure atmosphere is not taken into consideration. According to Fig. 3A of the Horiuchi reference, moisture cannot be removed sufficiently from alignment film 2 because alignment film 2 is covered with roughened plate 102.

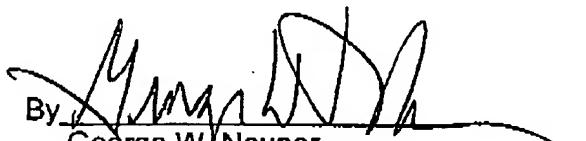
In the step of releasing the pressure-reduced atmosphere prior to the bonding step in the present invention, the pressure-reduced atmosphere is released by "inert gas", instead of simple release at the atmosphere. Horiuchi has an object different from that of the invention of the subject application and does not use such inert gas.

In view of the discussion above and the arguments made in the paper filed August 10, 2010, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending application is in condition for allowance. An early reconsideration and notice of allowance are earnestly solicited.

If for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, the Commissioner is hereby authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. 04-1105.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
George W. Neuner
Registration No.: 26,964
EDWARDS ANGELL PALMER & DODGE
LLP
P.O. Box 55874
Boston, Massachusetts 02205
(617) 517-5538
Attorneys/Agents For Applicant

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